

Message Text

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TO AMEMBASSY BELGRADE

AMCONSUL ZAGREB

INFO AMCONSUL MUNICH

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E. O. 11652: N/ A

TAGS: PFOR, YO

SUBJECT: YUGOSLAV PRESS ATTACKS ON VOA AND EMBASSY
INTERVIEWING OF CAMP COUNSELOR APPLICANTS

REF: BELGRADE 1141 AND PREVIOUS

1. FOLLOWING IS RECORD OF MEETING BETWEEN DEPARTMENT
OFFICER (ACTING DIRECTOR OFFICE OF EASTERN EUROPEAN
AFFAIRS JOHNSON) AND YUGOSLAV EMBASSY MINISTER- COUNSELOR
(OSOLNIK) MARCH 19. MAIN POINTS MADE BY JOHNSON:

A. WE WANT YUGOSLAV EMBASSY TO BE FULLY AWARE OF THE
CONCERN REGISTERED BY EMBASSY BELGRADE OFFICERS IN
MEETINGS WITH FEDERAL SECRETARIAT FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS
AMERICAN BUREAU DIRECTOR KREACIC AND WITH INFORMATION
SECRETARY BUDIMOVSKI OVER TOTALLY UNFOUNDED SLUR ON VOA IN
YUGOSLAV PRESS, ALLEGING VOA MICROPHONES ARE GIVEN OVER TO
EMIGRE SPOKESMEN FOR USTASHI TERRORISM.

B. IT IS NOT GOOD ENOUGH TO EXCHANGE EXPRESSIONS OF
PIOUS HOPE ON BOTH SIDES THAT ISOLATED INCIDENTS WILL NOT
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BE MISINTERPRETED AND ALLOWED TO DAMAGE MORE IMPORTANT
BILATERAL INTERESTS BOTH COUNTRIES HAVE IN EXPANDING ECO-

NOMIC COOPERATION, EDUCATIONAL, SCIENTIFIC AND OTHER EXCHANGES, MORE TOURIST TRAVEL, CIVIL AIR AGREEMENTS,

POLITICAL DISCUSSIONS, AND GOOD EFFECTS OF FRIENDLY VISITS SUCH AS VISIT MOST RECENTLY CARRIED OUT BY DEPUTY PREMIER SIROTKOVIC. CONSTRUCTIVE ACTIONS WILL BE NEEDED. IN OUR VIEW, ONE SUCH ACTION THAT COULD HELP KEEP INCIDENTS IN PERSPECTIVE WOULD BE PUBLICATION IN YUGOSLAV PRESS OF CORRECTIVE ARTICLE OR LETTER REFLECTING RECOGNITION BY GOY THAT VOA HAS GIVEN NO FACILITATION TO ANY USTASHI EMIGRE ELEMENT.

C. FURTHER CONSTRUCTIVE STEP WOULD BE EFFORT TO RESOLVE ANY FUTURE CONTENTIOUS ISSUES SUCH AS ROLE OF EMBASSY AND CONGEN OFFICERS IN STUDENT CAMP COUNSELOR INTERVIEWS, THROUGH OFFICIAL CHANNELS WITHOUT PRIOR PREJUDICIAL AND DISTORTED EXPLOITATION IN PRESS.

2. IN REPLY, OSOLNIK GAVE SIMILAR STRESS TO IMPORTANCE OF NOT ALLOWING ISOLATED INCIDENTS TO OVERSHADOW DEVELOPMENTS OF GREATER SUBSTANCE. HE HOPED DEPARTMENT WOULD INTERPRET WILLINGNESS OF DEPUTY PREMIER SIROTKOVIC TO VISIT AND BE INTERVIEWED BY VOA DURING HIS RECENT VISIT TO WASHINGTON AS BEING MORE SIGNIFICANT DEVELOPMENT THAN THE " FRONT" ARTICLE OF MARCH 16.

3. WITHOUT PREJUDICE TO RESULTS OF INVESTIGATION INTO ORIGINS OF SLUR AS PROMISED BY BUDIMOVSKI AND KREACIC, OSOLNIK SPECULATED THAT DRAFTER OF " FRONT" ARTICLE MAY HAVE FAILED TO RECOGNIZE DISTINCTION BETWEEN VOA AND LOCAL ETHNIC PROGRAMS IN NEW YORK AND CHICAGO AREAS CONDUCTED BY PRO- USTASHA ELEMENTS.

4. OSOLNIK THEN UNDERCUT THIS THOUGHT SOMEWHAT BY REMARKING THAT VOA ALBANIAN SERVICE BROADCASTS REACH ALBANIAN MINORITY IN YUGOSLAVIA AND THAT VOA EMPLOYS ANTI- YUGOSLAV ALBANIAN WITH BACKGROUND IN ALBANIAN EMIGRE ORGANIZATION " BALI KOMBETAR". LATTER ORGANIZATION, HE SAID, COLLABORATES WITH USTASHA MOVEMENT IN NEW YORK CITY.

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5. ON SUBJECT RADIO BROADCASTS, OSOLNIK SAID GOY CONSIDERS WESTERN ANALYSTS OF YUGOSLAV EVENTS UNDULY DEPENDENT ON WHATEVER LINE IS TAKEN BY RFE YUGOSLAV RESEARCH SECTION WHICH EXISTS EVEN THOUGH RFE DOES NOT BROADCAST TO YUGOSLAVIA.

6. ON QUESTION WHETHER ONE WAY TO CORRECT RECORD WOULD BE FOR YUGOSLAV NEWSPAPER TO PRINT LETTER FROM EMBASSY PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICER, OSOLNIK SAID YUGOSLAV EMBASSY IMPRESSED

WITH REGULARITY WITH WHICH US PRESS OF LATE HAS PRINTED ONLY LETTERS HOSTILE TO OR CRITICAL OF YUGOSLAV GOVERNMENT.

HE MENTIONED LETTER IN CHRISTIAN SCIENCE MONITOR FROM YUGOSLAV EMIGRE GEORGE PRPICH THAT FAILED TO GIVE READER ANY INSIGHT INTO USTASHA BACKGROUND OF PRPICH. HE ALSO MENTIONED LETTER IN NEW YORK TIMES MARCH 18 HEADED "REPRESSION IN BELGRADE", IN WHICH PROFESSORS STANLEY HOFFMANN, NOAM CHOMSKY AND J. K. GALBRAITH, AND "SIX OTHER SCHOLARS FROM HARVARD AND BOSTON UNIVERSITIES" COMPLAIN OF INJUSTICE DONE TO SERBIAN- MARXIST THEORIST MIHAILO DJURIC.

7. OSOLNIK REFERRED TO THIS LETTER ABOUT DJURIC IN SUFFICIENT PROXIMITY TO REMARKS ABOUT RFE AS TO IMPLY THAT HE THOUGHT TENDENTIOUS INTERPRETATION OF REASONS FOR 6 MONTH SENTENCE GIVEN TO DJURIC CAME FROM SERBIAN EMIGRE RFE ANALYST. OSOLNIK STRESSED USG RESPONSIBILITY FOR RFE OPERATIONS INCLUDING EMIGRE RESEARCHERS WHO FEED MATERIAL TO JOURNALISTS AND UNIVERSITIES.

8. IN SEPARATE CONVERSATION REGARDING CAMP COUNSELOR INTERVIEWING BY EMBASSY OFFICERS, OSOLNIK REPEATED POLITICAL QUESTIONS REPORTEDLY PUT TO APPLICANTS BY EMBASSY OFFICERS, AND SAID THEY "SEEM VERY STRANGE" COMING FROM OFFICERS SUPPOSEDLY SOPHISTICATED ABOUT YUGOSLAV AFFAIRS. THRUST OF HIS COMMENTS ON THIS POINT WAS THAT STUDENT ELEMENTS COULD NOT FAIL TO EXPLOIT TARGET THIS VULNERABLE AND THAT YUGOSLAV PRESS COULD NOT BE RESTRAINED FROM GIVING IT SENSATIONALIST PLAY.

9. COMMENT: THESE EXPRESSIONS OF YUGOSLAV CONCERN ABOUT LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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VOA BROADCASTS AS OVERHEARD BY LARGE ALBANIAN MINORITY IN YUGOSLAVIA AND ABOUT CIRCULATION OF RFE YUGOSLAV RESEARCH MATERIAL TO NONGOVERNMENTAL AGENCIES ARE EITHER NEW OR AT LEAST HAVE NOT BEEN VOICED IN RECENT YEARS SO FAR AS DEPARTMENT AWARE. IF YUGOSLAVS REPEAT REMARKS ABOUT ALBANIAN BROADCASTS, PAO WILL RECALL HOW BUDIMOVSKI URGED USIA/ IEE DIRECTOR JENKINS TO CONTINUE ALBANIAN BROADCASTS AT THEIR MEETING TWO YEARS AGO. FYI, ALBANIAN SERVICE EMPLOYEE HAS ASSURED USIA HIS ASSOCIATION WITH ALBANIAN EMIGRE ORGANIZATION "BALI KOMBETAR" ENDED EIGHT YEARS AGO.

10. OSOLNIK WAS HIS USUAL SELF IN BRINGING FORTH DEBATER'S POINTS BUT IN MANNER HE WAS UNUSUALLY SUBDUED AND CONCILIATORY. HE SEEMED GENUINELY ANXIOUS TO SEE USG ACCEPT RECENT INCIDENTS AS ISOLATED EPISODES AND NOT AS

PART OF HIGH- LEVEL PLAN TO INHIBIT FURTHER DEVELOPMENT OF
US- YUGOSLAV RELATIONS. REMAINS TO BE SEEN WHETHER HE WILL
HELP BELGRADE GET MESSAGE THAT US CAN' T BE MADE SCAPEGOAT
FOR INTERNAL YUGOSLAV DIFFICULTIES WITHOUT SOME DAMAGE TO

BILATERAL RELATIONS. ROGERS

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